

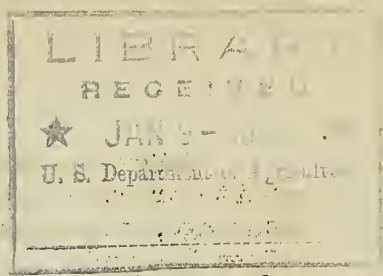
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

A Christmas Gift Basket of Foods



A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, December 20, 1932.

As I was coming up to the studio just now, something I saw on the street reminded me of an old English nursery rhyme I learned as a child.

"Christmas is coming,
The geese are getting fat
Please put a penny
In the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny
A ha' penny will do
And if you haven't a ha' penny
God bless you."

Well, I suppose it was two or three hundred years ago when somebody put that jingle down on paper - long before the days of community chests, and the Red Cross, and our modern systematic ways of distributing relief. Anyway it serves to remind us that this isn't the first or maybe even the worst depression. Also that there's nothing new about the idea of sharing food with the needy at Christmas time.

So today I am going to pass along to you a suggestion for a gift basket of food that you may want to leave at somebody's door on Christmas Eve. I asked Dr. Hazel Stiebeling of our bureau to help me plan it, because she's a nutrition specialist as well as a food economist. And I know you want to spend your money so that it will buy the most nourishing foods at the lowest cost.

If you have a paper and pencil handy perhaps you'd like to jot down this list of foods for the gift basket. We've included a variety of foods and enough of them to make appetizing meals for a family of five over the Christmas week end, perhaps even a little longer. We figure that this basket of foods will cost about \$3. Naturally you'll need to check up with prices in your own market.

I'm going to start with what we call the "protective" foods. Oftentimes they are the first to be crowded out when people economize.

So first comes milk, especially if there are children in the family. We suggest you put three tall cans of evaporated milk in your gift basket. Even if the family gets fresh milk this will keep for emergency use. Then beside the three tall cans of evaporated milk, put in half a pound of cheese.

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Next come the vegetables and fruits, headed by 3 to 4 pounds of potatoes - white or sweet - whichever are cheapest. Then a head of lettuce or a head of cabbage, the greenest cabbage you can find because it is richest in vitamins. Then 2 pounds of carrots or turnips, preferably yellow turnips, because they are also richest in vitamins. Then look for a bargain in other vegetables and get 2 more pounds of onions, or beets, or whatever seems a good buy. And by all means include one good-sized can of tomatoes.

Then for fruits, put in 2 pounds of apples, 1/2 dozen oranges, and 1 pound of dried fruit - prunes, dried peaches, apricots, or raisins. We've also allowed 10 cents for half a pound of peanuts.

Next on the list comes 1/2 dozen eggs and then some meat. I think you'll find fresh pork one of the cheapest meats now. For 50 cents I believe you can get a nice pork roast, or a shoulder of lamb, or a piece of beef chuck, or heel of the round for a savory pot roast with some of the vegetables.

Butter and sugar are next - a pound of butter and 2 pounds of sugar.

Then 2 loaves of bread and a package of whole-wheat cereal. No, we haven't forgotten a pound of coffee, or a quarter of a pound of tea, if the family prefers that.

Last of all tuck in a cake or two of soap. The relief workers tell us there's a very close connection these days between soap and morale.

Now here's another suggestion. Perhaps you want to give only a box of foods that will keep. Well, for a family on short rations you couldn't do better than give them several cans of tomatoes, or evaporated milk, or canned salmon, or a bag of potatoes, or several pounds of dried beans, or a box of dried fruit.

Let's not hesitate to be practical in our Christmas giving this year.

Next week Dr. Louise Stanley, chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, will be here with me. She'll review for you some high points in home economics during the past year.

Goodbye, for this time.